

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE TOWN REGENERATION PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE HELD ON 14th SEPTEMBER 2015 AT 7.30PM IN THE CIVIC CENTRE

PRESENT: Councillor R Claydon (Chairman), Cllr June Cordwell, Mr M Clarke (CALGS and Under-the-Edge Arts), Mr G Phillips (Wotton Arts Association), Mrs P Smith (Fair Trade Town Association), Cllr P Smith, Mrs J Tebb (Chamber of Trade and Wotton in Bloom), Cllr A Wilkinson, Cllr A Kendall (from 7.45pm)

IN ATTENDANCE: Deputy Clerk Mrs Yasmin Milsom

779. Apologies

Apologies were noted from Canon R Axford, Cllr K Collins, Cllr T Luker, Mrs T McLusky

780. Minutes of the Meeting Held on 1st June 2015

Proposed by Cllr Smith, seconded by Cllr Claydon, that the Minutes of the meeting held on 1st June 2015 be approved as a correct record. Agreed in favour with two abstentions.

781. Community Plan

The Chairman had prepared a progress report which outlined advice given from the Gloucestershire Rural Community Council and priorities going forward. GRCC advice was to concentrate effort into progressing some of the priority items identified in both the last Community Plan and the more recent community questionnaire, items which were within the remit of the Town Council. The Community Plan Working Group favours focusing on activities that would help to attract people into the town, such as car parking, appearance of the town and encouraging tourism. A grant from Stroud District Council had been pledged but requires that the Community Plan document is updated by March 2016. GRCC advice was not to spend too much time or money on producing the document itself, but to do a 'light' update of the earlier Community Plan. This would involve going through the plan and identifying what has been achieved so that these points can be recognised in the refreshed document – examples such as Holywell Leaze, Chamber of Trade, Farmers' Market, Cinema. It would also need to address what still needs to be done plus any newly identified issues. A few key people are needed to do this and there must be community input, not just Councillor input. It was proposed that the Community Plan Working Group would be joined by Cllr A Wilkinson, Mrs Tebb, Mr Clarke, Mr N Dadd. Mrs Tebb would also try to enrol a trader to assist with this process.

Cllr A Kendall entered the meeting

Mr Clarke commented that he had been very impressed with the standard of the Kingswood Neighbourhood Plan, both the documentation and the presentation at a recent village event.

782. Budget

Members considered a report on current expenditure against budget for this financial year. The website update will cost more than allowed for in this budget but the extra would come from earmarked reserves. An element was included in this budget for employing someone to carry out weeding and tidying in the town and, although this hasn't materialised so far this year, next year's budget will need to reflect this unless effort could be found within existing Council resources. Members were agreed that this was a priority for the town and that it required year-round commitment in order to keep on top of the problem. It was noted that the area around the Civic Centre needed weeding and that this should be a priority. It was suggested that a minimum of one day per week should be allowed for town tidying. Photographs were circulated of work undertaken by the Lions Club and Chamber of Trade to decorate the outside of Old Town Toilets. The Lions Club were always keen to assist with such town projects. Members were agreed that

provision in the budget for town tidying needs to be retained if other initiatives do not work out. It was also agreed to continue supporting the projects that had traditionally come under the remit of this committee, such as Wotton in Bloom. Provision for updating the website will not need to be included again. It was recommended that a modest amount, perhaps £200, should be allowed for internal refurbishment of Old Town Toilets, in particular to cover the black marks in the ladies toilets left after the electrical fire. The budget recommendation for this committee would be finalised at the next meeting when some of the variables would be resolved.

783. Farmers Market

A report was noted of income and expenditure from the Farmers' Market for the last ten years which demonstrated that stall numbers and associated income was progressively decreasing. Several suggestions were made, including: introducing an outdoor market at the top of High Street on the same day as the Farmers' Market – this raised concerns over traffic and parking; antiques or similar themed market held in the upstairs of the Town Hall; a general market, which could still include Farmers' Market stalls, held over both floors of the Town Hall and outside in the Stony Chipping as well. It was suggested that this latter proposal could be tried for one year and then the financial position reviewed. It was agreed to explore this possibility and it was further suggested that it could be called a Pannier market.

784. Walking Festival

This has been discussed at the Footpaths Committee as well as at previous Town Regeneration meetings and it has been decided to set up a Working Group comprising members of both committees plus any other interested volunteers to take the project forward. The Working Group will be set up and the first meeting arranged at the Footpaths Committee meeting on 23rd September 2015, so those members interested in being involved are invited to attend. Several suggestions were made regarding people who might be interested; themed walks; involving the Round Table/Ladies Circle in setting up/providing refreshments; Cotswold AONB grant scheme.

785. Giant Slide

A 100 metre long giant slide is being organised to be sited in the main street on Sunday, 10th July 2016 to raise funds for the British School PTA. Shops will be encouraged to open, there will be charity stalls and it is expected that there will be around 3000 attendees.

786. Reports from Partners

a) Chamber of Trade – They are consulting with Stroud District Council's Conservation Officer with regard to the giant poster on the corner of Church Street and Old Town. There is a lot of local support for the poster.

b) Wotton in Bloom – The baskets have once again been really lovely this year. One basket was stolen but there have been no other problems.

c) CALGS – They are now roughly half-way through the 12 month eviction notice period and several possibilities are being explored with a view to possible purchase of the site. Contact has been made with gardeners at the New Road and Knapp Road allotment sites and they have around 600 supporters worldwide. Their situation is being viewed as a test case. There is considerable interest in identifying, recording and preserving other green spaces in and around Wotton and to recognise these as assets along with the other hard assets and this is, perhaps, something to be considered in the update of the Community Plan.

d) Under-the-Edge Arts – A statutory report was circulated, along with the programme of upcoming events. A number of other ideas are being explored, including a joint art and sculpture trail; a paint the town event; and a Blues event, which would be a joint initiative with the Chamber of Trade.

e) Wotton Arts Association – The Arts Festival has been operating for 43 years and would take place next year from April 22nd to May 1st. Their AGM would take place on 8th October 2015. The New Year’s Eve concert would be held in St Mary’s church as usual. Collaboration between Under-the-Edge Arts and the Arts Association was suggested in organising future events.

f) Fair Trade Town – It was time to renew the Fair Trade Town status. Many of those involved previously have moved away and new members are required. It was suggested that the owners of Fish out of Water might be interested. If more assistance is needed then Alex Wilkinson, President of the Chamber of Trade, is happy to be contacted.

g) St Mary’s Churchyard working parties – Thanks to the Town Clerk, Sue Bailey, for organising two working parties to clear overgrowth in St Mary’s churchyard. Along with work carried out by the Buildings Manager, the Cotswold Wardens and the contractor, it has made a huge difference. Next year’s working parties will be advertised more widely.

787. Any Other Reports

It was noted that Joe Brand, the comedienne, had been ‘rescued’ after getting lost in Westridge Woods in the summer. She had been very complimentary about the town and it was suggested that she could be invited to launch the Walking Festival.

Thanks were expressed to the Deputy Clerk for her assistance with some of the matters raised at the last Town Council meeting.

The Chairman thanked members for attending.

This completed the business of the Town Regeneration Partnership.

Signed:

Dated:

Chairman of the Town Regeneration Partnership